

Assabet River, Great Meadows, and Oxbow National Wildlife Refuges

Final CCP Update

Status

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or We) received approximately 2,000 comments on the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) that was issued in July 2003. Thank you to all who provided comments and corrections!

We have reviewed all of the comments and have been busy evaluating, discussing, and revising our decisions for the final CCP and the management actions that we will undertake. We have presented our recommended revisions to senior refuge staff at our Regional Headquarters.

On the following pages, we highlight our revisions to a few public use programs and activities.

We will be creating individual Final CCPs for each refuge. After all of the recommendations and revisions have been approved by the Regional Director, the final CCP's will be finalized and distributed.

We intend to have the completed CCP's released late in the summer of 2004.

Compatibility Determinations

To allow any activity to occur on a national wildlife refuge, it must be found compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established. As a part of the draft CCP, we issued compatibility determinations (CDs) for the 3 refuges for hunting, fishing,



wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation, non-motorized boating, natural history tours, cultural history tours, and snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

In addition, we have issued CDs for scientific research on each of the 3 refuges and for jogging and motorized boating at Great Meadows NWR and for jogging on Oxbow NWR. We inadvertently left these CDs out of the Draft CCP. The draft CDs were issued on June 21, 2004. The CDs are available on-line at <http://easternmanwrcomplex.fws.gov/index.html> or at refuge headquarters (contact information provided below).

The 30 day comment period will end on July 20, 2004. You may submit comments by email to northeastplanning@fws.gov or by hard copy to:

Bill Perry
Refuge Planner
Eastern MA NWR Complex
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776.



Clarifications and modifications to our proposed hunting program

Hunting is one of six priority wildlife dependent public uses on national wildlife refuges. We proposed hunting opportunities on portions of the refuges in the draft CCP. We received a number of comments specific to safety of the public and adjacent landowners. We also received concerns about the potential for conflicts between hunting and other priority wildlife dependent uses.

Following the issuance of the Final CCPs, we will develop the final hunt plans for each of the refuges. These hunt plans will include details about any time/day restrictions that we may institute.

Based upon these comments and our review Alternative B, we are refining our proposal. In the following sections we summarize only the adjustments and clarifications to the hunting areas that are being considered. Please also review the associated maps that are included in this newsletter. In addition, the maps are available at <http://easternmanwrcomplex.fws.gov> or at the Refuge Headquarters in Sudbury.

Assabet River NWR

We are expanding the "Archery Only" section on the North section to include all of the areas outside of the Patrol Road. We are changing the entirety of the South section to "Archery Only".

Oxbow NWR

We evaluated our proposal that limited hunting to the Nashua River only and found that it did not provide

appropriate opportunity for waterfowl hunters. We are therefore including the wetland areas and pools adjacent to the Nashua River south of Route 2 for waterfowl hunting. These adjacent wetlands will provide a high quality waterfowl hunting experience.

Great Meadows NWR

In the Concord Division of the refuge, our proposal for waterfowl hunting includes associated wetlands adjacent to the Concord River, from the Route 225 Bridge upstream to the area where refuge ownership ends on the west side of the Concord River in the town of Carlisle. This is the area at the northern end of the O'Rourke property. There is no waterfowl hunting proposed on the Concord River and associated wetlands along refuge ownership in the town of Concord nor in or around the "impoundments" of the Concord Unit.

In the Sudbury Division of the refuge, waterfowl hunting will be available from Shermans Bridge south to Route 20. No waterfowl hunting will be allowed south of Route 20.

Other proposed public uses

Fees

We will revise our fee schedule for the refuges. We plan to change the fees to a daily fee of \$4/vehicle or group (the same as proposed in the draft CCP); \$12 annual fee (a reduction from \$20 in the draft CCP); and a \$20 hunting permit fee (all seasons and refuges). At the time of purchase of the hunting permit, the hunter may purchase an annual pass (good for non-hunting access) for an additional \$5. We will

pursue opportunities for on-line annual pass issuance and acceptance of credit card information to process requests.

Jogging

We are issuing a compatibility determina-



tion (CD) for jogging that will authorize jogging on refuge trails for Great Meadows and Oxbow NWRs. We are also undertaking a research project to determine whether or not jogging has any impacts on wildlife or participants in wildlife dependent recreation. Following the study we will re-evaluate the compatibility of jogging on the refuges.

Picnicking

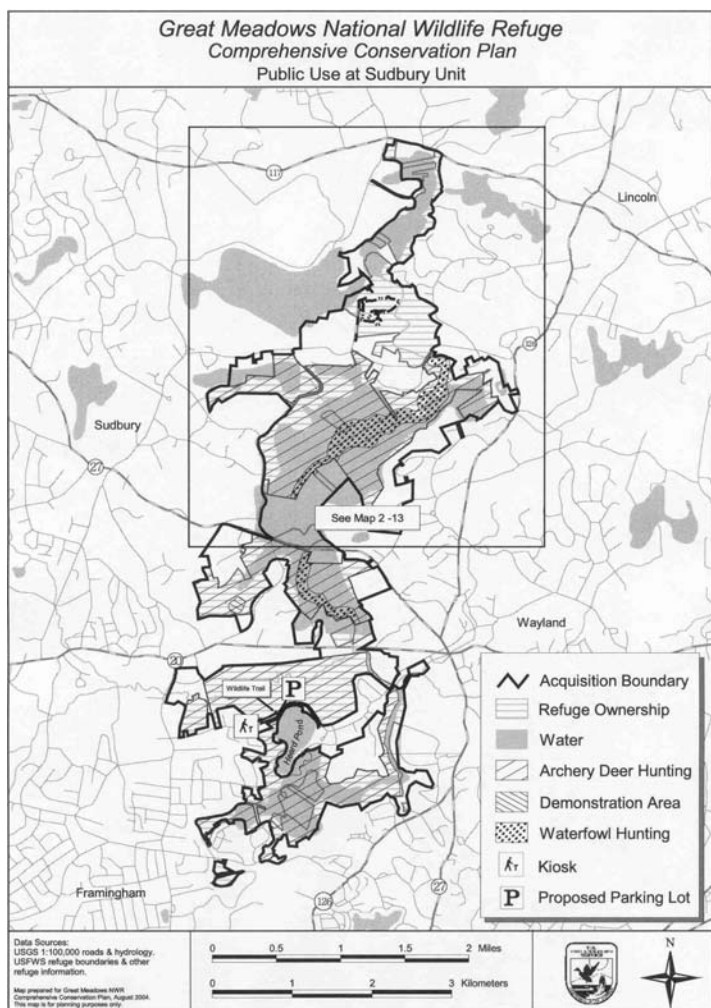
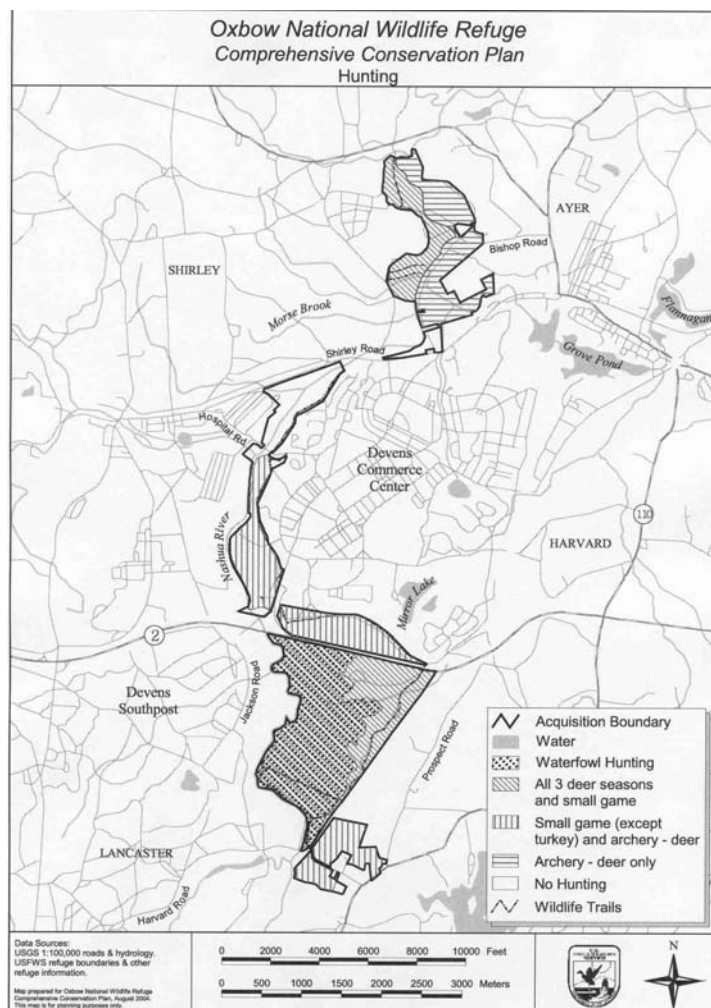
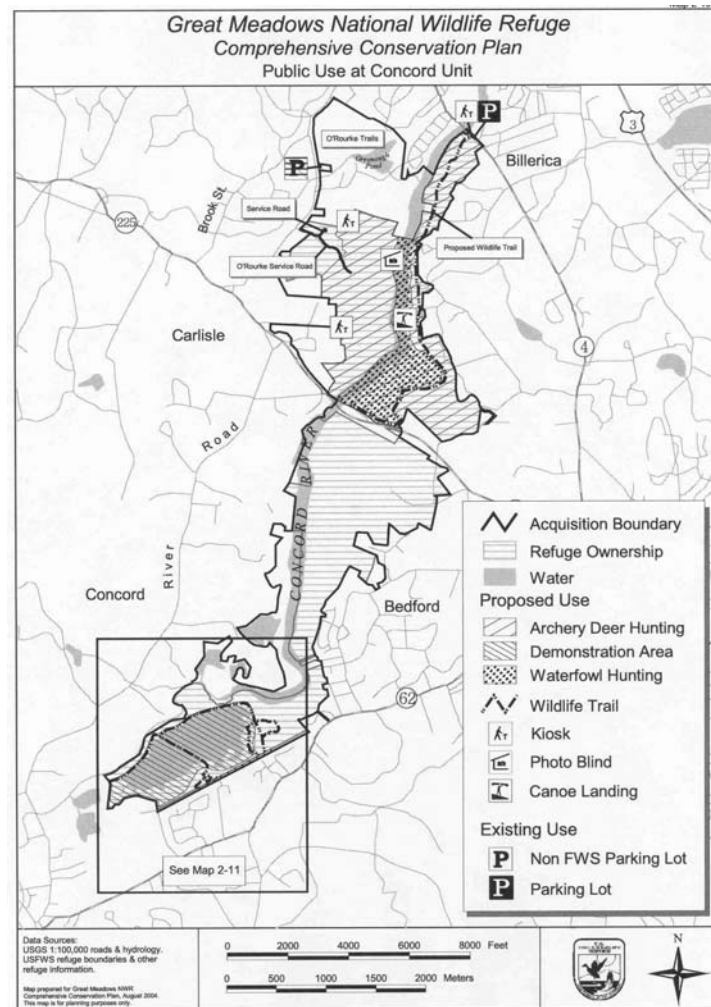
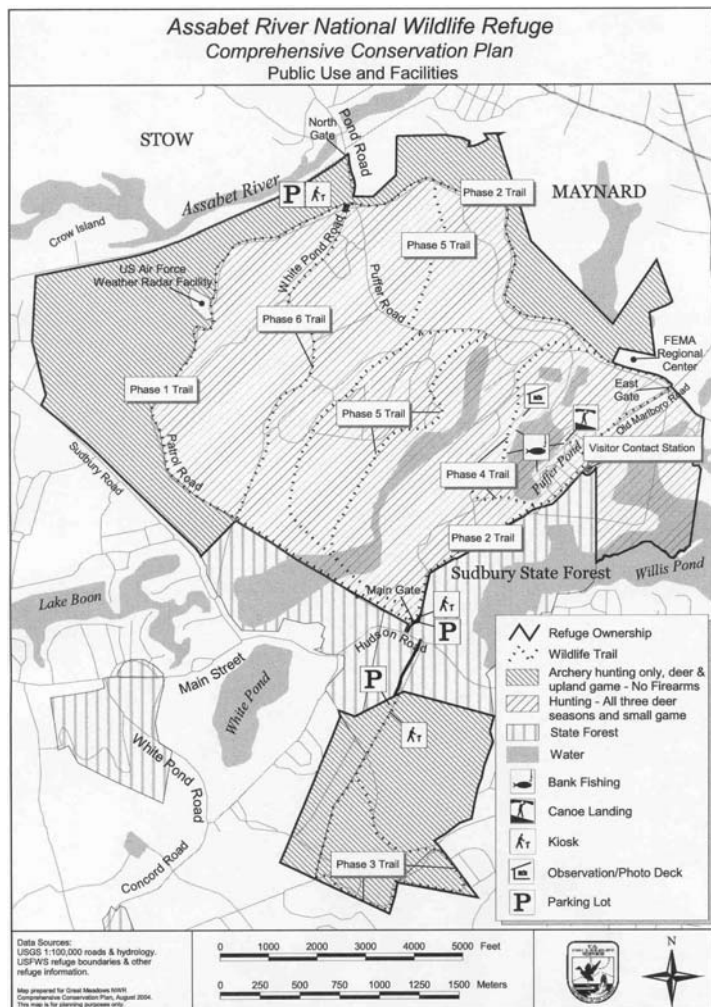
We have clarified the CCP to indicate that individuals and families may eat while at the refuge. However, we will not provide facilities for picnicking or permits for events such as family reunions, weddings, etc.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

June 2004





Bill Perry
Refuge Planner
Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776

Release of final CCPs

Staff at the refuges and the Service's Northeast Regional Office have made proposed revisions to the CCPs. Once the revisions have been approved, we will release the final CCPs and implementation can begin immediately.

The final products of this effort will be a stand alone CCP for each of the refuges and a common set of appendices. We anticipate the release to occur late this summer.

We will make the CCPs available on our websites: <http://easternmanwrcomplex.fws.gov> or <http://northeast.fws.gov/planning>.

In addition, we will make hard copies or Compact Disks available to local and state offices, libraries, and any individual that requests one.

If you would like to obtain either a hard copy of individual CCPs or a Compact Disk that contains all of the CCPs please check the appropriate box and return:

Hard Copies	
<input type="checkbox"/> Assabet River NWR	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Meadows NWR
<input type="checkbox"/> Oxbow NWR	<input type="checkbox"/> Appendices

☐ CD

Name: _____

Return to:
Bill Perry, Refuge Planner
Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex
73 Weir Hill Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

Address: _____

